

April 2016

# Senior Health and Wellness Newsletter

Kentucky Department for Aging and Independent Living



## Microwave Cooking and Safe Temperatures

The microwave has become the easiest way to cook food in the home. Microwaves can be used for defrosting, cooking, and reheating of food. They are fast, take up very little space and does not heat up the kitchen like other appliances. However, **Safe Food Practices** should still be used when cooking in the microwave.



### Remember:

- ◇ Thaw food using the defrost button on your microwave.
- ◇ Remove food from packaging before defrosting. Do not use foam trays and plastic wrap because they are not heat stable at high temperatures
- ◇ Cook meat, poultry, egg casseroles and fish immediately after defrosting in the microwave oven. During defrosting the food heats up and can cause bacteria to grow.
- ◇ Cover food with a lid or microwave safe plastic wrap to hold in moisture and for safe and even heating.
- ◇ After reheating foods in the microwave oven, allow the food to “stand”. Then, use a clean food thermometer to check that food has reached 165 degrees F.

### Microwave–Safe Containers & Wraps

- ◇ Only use cookware that is specially manufactured for use in the microwave oven. Glass, ceramic containers and all plastics should be labeled microwave safe.
- ◇ Plastic storage containers such as margarine tubs, take-out containers and other one-time use containers are not suitable for microwave use. They can melt and leak chemicals into food during the cooking process.
- ◇ Microwave plastic wrap, wax paper, cooking bags, and parchment paper and white microwave-safe paper towels should be safe to use. Do not let plastic wrap touch the food during cooking in microwave.
- ◇ Never use plastic storage bags, brown paper or plastic grocery bags, newspapers or aluminum foil in the microwave.



## CHECKING YOUR TEMPERATURES!

Cooking your food to the correct temperature is important to destroy any harmful bacteria that could make you or your family sick. Looking at a food item, touching it to make sure it is hot, or looking for steam or color of food is not the correct way to check to that food is done.

*1 out of 4 hamburgers turns brown before it's been cooked to a safe internal temperature.*

## A FOOD THERMOMETER IS THE ONLY WAY TO DETERMINE IF YOUR FOOD IS FULLY COOKED

References:

[Www.homefoodsafety.org](http://www.homefoodsafety.org)

[Www.conagrafood.com/our-commitment/food-safety](http://www.conagrafood.com/our-commitment/food-safety)

## HOTLINE PHONE NUMBERS

**Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC)**

1-877-925-0037

**Poison Emergency and Information**

1-800-222-1222 or 1-800-722-5725

## How do you use a food thermometer?

- The food thermometer should be thoroughly cleaned before and after each use
- The thermometer should be placed in the thickest part of the food, not touching bone, fat or gristle.
- Follow the directions that came with the thermometer.
- Temperature rules apply to microwave cooking, too. Cooking in the microwave can cause uneven cooking. You should stir your food during the cooking process to make sure the food is cooking evenly
- Food should be cooked to 165 degrees F. Stir the food when the cooking is complete and let stand for two minutes before eating.
- Keep hot foods at 140 degrees F or above. Do not let your food sit too long. Letting your food temperature drop to below 140 degrees can cause bacteria to grow in your food.



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